

COMMUNITY NEWS



Cindy McArthur, left, coordinator of the JSC Educator Resource Center at Space Center Houston, gives some educational materials to Lisa Jackson, seventh grade teacher at Christa McAuliffe Middle School in Missouri City as some students look on.



Educator Resource Center Coordinator Cindy McArthur, right, reviews some classroom materials with Christine Burgoon, third grade teacher at Westchester Elementary School in Baltimore.

Educator Resource Center attendance increases 300 percent during first year

THE JSC EDUCATOR RESOURCE CENTER at Space Center Houston served more than 5,000 educators during calendar 1998, its first full year of operation.

The Educator Resource Center is operated by Space Center Houston and JSC in partnership. Educators from around the world receive personalized instruction using information based on NASA's unique mission.

“We’re really happy with the large number of teachers we’re able to serve with the ERC,” said Billie Deason, education lead at JSC’s Office of Public Affairs. “The facilities and expertise of NASA and Space Center Houston make the ERC a unique resource for educators.”

JSC and SCH combined their unique capabilities in May 1997 to establish the center. The center was moved from on-site at JSC to SCH to allow easier access for teachers. As a result, attendance increased by more than 300 percent over the previous year.

Cindy McArthur, formerly a kindergarten teacher in the Clear Creek Independent School District, joined SCH last September as coordinator of the ERC.

“The ERC attracts teachers from across all of the disciplines,” said McArthur. “Science and math teachers who visit us already know that they are going to use space as a theme in their classroom presentations. But to see the language arts and the music teachers who come in and leave so excited because they have discovered some application that they can use in their classrooms makes the experience all the more fulfilling for us.”

Part of NASA's comprehensive education program, the ERC contributes to national educational goals by helping teachers expand and enhance their students' scientific and technological competence. Educators have immediate access to a wealth of information based on NASA's programs, technologies, and discoveries.

“Our school just opened this year, so I stopped by to get some educational materials,” said Christine Burgoon, a third grade teacher at Westchester Elementary School in Baltimore. “The students are very interested in space and astronomy. And they have computers in their classrooms, so the Web sites listed in these materials will be very helpful.”

The ERC is free to educators. It has created a range of educational programs to make science come alive through teacher workshops, video programs, Internet access, video dubbing and NASA education materials.

Available at the center are:

- ❖ **NASA education materials, including the agency's exciting activity guides.** They are available for all grade levels. The activities focus on integrating math, science, and technology into the classroom. NASA educational and informational materials are provided at no cost. The ERC also offers information on how to purchase supplemental curriculum materials for a minimal fee.
- ❖ **Internet access.** Teachers are shown how to access NASA's vast online resources.
- ❖ **Trained advisors.** Certified teachers consult with the educator on classroom needs and project ideas.
- ❖ **Educator workshops.** Experts help train teachers to get the most out of NASA's curriculum guides.
- ❖ **Lift-off to Learning video series.** In these state-of-the-art video productions, shuttle astronauts share space experiences. These videos and more can be viewed and copied for the classroom at the ERC.

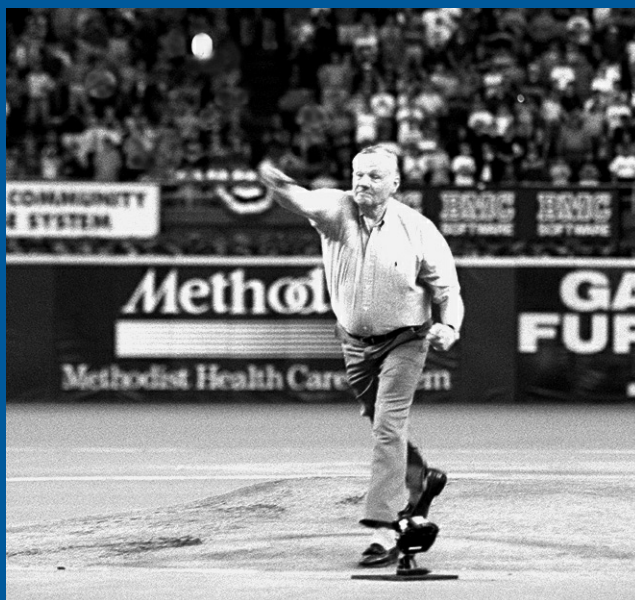
In addition to the ERC being open without charge to educators, SCH's parking fee is waived for them. A total of 5,043 educators used the ERC last year.

The ERC is inside SCH, through the flight deck of the shuttle mock-up. Its hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays. Weekend appointments are available. For details, call 281-244-2129 or 800-972-0369, x2129. ■

Armstrong opens Astros' season with ceremonial first pitch



Neil Armstrong was escorted by former Astros Jimmy Wynn and Bob Aspromonte and flanked on both sides of the infield by 89 NASA astronauts. Armstrong walked to the mound and tossed the pitch to second baseman Craig Biggio.



Armstrong, the first man to walk on the moon, throws out the ceremonial first pitch prior to the Houston Astros' opening day game April 6, just like he did along with 23 Mercury astronauts on April 12, 1965, in the first National League game ever played at the Astrodome. This season marks the final year that the Astros will play in the Astrodome.